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Organizational Citizenship Behaviors of Directors: An Integrated Framework of Director Role-Identity and Boardroom Structure

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Abstract While directors' task boundaries are usually ambiguous, some of their activities or behaviors clearly constitute their formal duties, whereas others are usually perceived as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Applying identity theory, we present a theoretical model that demonstrates one of the key drivers for directors to engage in OCB with a focus on their role identity. We argue that an individual director's role identity is one of the key factors that motivate directors to engage in OCB. Furthermore, we propose that two board-level contingencies, board capital, and informal board hierarchy order, can moderate the effect of directors' role-identity salience on their OCB. That is, low levels of board capital and directors' higher positions in a board's informal hierarchy enhance directors' motivation to engage in OCB.

Keywords Board capital · Board informal hierarchy · Board of directors · Director identity · Organization citizenship behavior

> "But by far the best way to make sure you have an awesome board is to start by having awesome board members". Matt Blumberg (CEO of Return Path)

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> "Many of our directors agreed that when they were starting out on their boards, they could have benefited from more help from standing directors". (Finkelstein and Mooney 2003, p. 109)

> "Some directors are willing to take on the professional risk and help lead the firm out of crisis". (Withers et al. 2012, p. 836)

> "If I see Leo [Apotheker, a fellow board member and the head of customer operations] doing a great job, I say, 'Wow, great!' I am quite willing to subordinate some of my own priorities to help him achieve the common goal". (Doz and Kosonen 2007, p. 101)

Introduction

The benefits of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) are acknowledged in organizational studies. OCB refers to "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ 1988, p. 4). Research has found that individual engagement in OCB can increase knowledge sharing and job performance (Lin 2008; Wei 2014), enhance team and group cohesiveness (Lin and Peng 2010; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1997), contribute to the overall effectiveness of management and the organization (Podsakoff et al. 1997; Rego and Cunha 2008), and consequently improve both the financial and non-financial performance of firms (Koys 2001; Organ 1990; Ryan 2002). Without OCB, a work group may not be able to achieve its performance goals, and the organization may lose its competitive advantage.

However, research on OCB is new in the boardroom governance literature. The antecedents and outcomes of OCB in board members have not been explored in the literature, and research has not examined the contingency factors that may influence these relationships. A possible explanation is that the job description of corporate directors is often broad and ambiguous (He and Huang 2011). For instance, directors are responsible for monitoring managerial decision making and are expected to provide advice to management (Hillman and Dalziel 2003); the manner in which they are required to fulfill such tasks is difficult to specify. As with other types of employees and professionals, some of the tasks and activities of directors, such as attending board meetings and serving on board committees, are clearly defined in their job description.[1] In contrast, other activities are more discretionary in nature, and not engaging in such activities does not generally lead to explicit punishment. It is acknowledged that directors perform their "hard-to-measure" duties only a few times a year; however, we argue that this makes engagement in OCB even more important when differentiating between an effective board and an ineffective board. Studies by Bell (1993) and Preston and Brown (2004) suggest that helping other board members, volunteering one's time on extra duties, or committing to responsible trusteeship can improve the governance capability of a board, which in turn leads to a better functioning board. Thus, OCB is not only a management issue but also a governance issue that requires further examination.

Taking the first step to explore this issue, we begin by developing a conceptual framework that integrates role-identity theory and the OCB literature to emphasize the following: (1) individual-level role identity that may affect a director's motivation to engage in OCB and (2) board-level structural dimensions that may alter the strength of a director's motivation to engage in OCB. Extending role-identity theory, we argue that the "role-identity" and "role-identity alignment" of an individual director play important roles in influencing his or her motivation to engage in OCB. Directors are individuals with different role configurations because many of them are knowledgeable professionals who often have multiple roles and positions in addition to a board position in an organization. Hence, their different role identities can influence their behavior in executing their role and responsibilities as a director. Further, the likelihood of a director being engaged in OCB is contingent upon board-level characteristics because the board of directors functions as a group. In particular, following the literature on board structure, we argue that "board capital" and "informal board hierarchy order" can affect a director's degree of willingness to engage in OCB, thereby moderating the likelihood of the director's engagement in OCB.

This conceptual paper contributes to the board literature in three ways. First, by extending the research on director identity and behavior (Hillman et al. 2008; Withers et al. 2012), this paper explores a new behavioral dimension of directors—OCB. Several studies have reported the presence of some form of OCB by directors in organizations. For example, Withers et al. (2012) argue that some directors stay with an organization to help it during a corporate crisis. Golden-Biddle and Rao (1997) report that some board members use different face-saving strategies to promote the effective governance of an organization. However, there is a lack of clear understanding of *why some directors engage in OCB while others do not*. By developing a theoretical framework of directors' OCB, this paper not only advances research on director identity but also highlights the importance of OCB in board research.

Second, by combining the board structure literature, this paper responds to the recent call for research on the multilevel nature of boards, as "individuals are nested within subgroups that are in turn nested within the broader board as a whole" (Johnson et al. 2013, p. 246). Focusing on two important board structural dimensions, we examine board capital and informal board hierarchy order as possible influences on directors' motivation to engage in OCB. While prior research theorizes that board capital affects strategic decisions and performance (see Johnson et al. 2013), we contend that the level of board capital affects the extent of the gaps for board members to fill by going beyond the minimally required duties, including engaging in OCB. The informal board hierarchy order can affect the expectation and effort norms for directors who are relatively senior on the board (He and Huang 2011), and this effect is in turn likely to influence their motivation to engage in OCB. By incorporating boardroom contingencies that may affect directors' motivation to engage in OCB, this paper also attempts to explain *why the same director engages in OCB in one organization but not in another*.

Third, this paper contributes to the literature by going beyond the models that rely on proxy factors such as directors' backgrounds, including board tenure, professional experience, and age, as well as financial compensation to explore their motivations to contribute to board effectiveness. It is likely that directors have a variety of motivations for accepting corporate directorships (Hambrick et al. 2008); some board members are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated to serve the board. Our model focuses on their OCB, which by definition constitutes intrinsically motivated actions because directors

[1] See recent job descriptions for non-executive directors advertised on Financial Times and Indeed for companies such as InCommunities and the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) (accessed on 5 June 2015).

engage in OCB without any expectation of tangible rewards. The development of a framework for directors' OCB can enable boards to identify and recruit suitable candidates to contribute to the vitality and effective performance of the board, thereby contributing positively to the organization.

This paper is organized as follows. We first discuss directors' OCB by presenting prior studies on this issue. We then present our theory on the effect of directors' role-identity salience and role identity overlapping with OCB. Subsequently, we discuss the moderating effects of board-level characteristics. The paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications of our proposed model, managerial implications, limitations, and a possible future research agenda.

OCB in the Boardroom

According to Organ (1988), two key characteristics of an individual's OCB are that it is "discretionary" and "not rewarded by the formal system". In later developments of OCB theories, many scholars have argued that although it is discretionary, OCB may be perceived as an "expected" part of the job of employees. This argument informs the debate on OCB in the context of in-role and extra-role behaviors, but it also acknowledges that the distinctions between OCB and in-role behavior are relatively hard to draw (Allen and Rush 1998; Morrison 1994; Podsakoff et al. 2000; Van Dyne et al. 1995). Furthermore, Organ (1988, 1997) argues that in-role behavior, extra-role behavior, and the distinctions between the two are not good alternative explanations for OCB because human behaviors are neither fixed nor unchangeable over time (Van Dyne et al. 1995). The distinction between in-role and extra-role behaviors among full-time employees in a typical working environment already lacks clarity, but it will be even more unclear with non-executive ("outside") board directors[2] who work on a part-time basis with a job description that is both "general and ambiguous" (He and Huang 2011, p. 1211). Therefore, we adopt the OCB construct to discuss outside directors' boardroom behaviors and consider OCB to include behaviors "that are relatively more likely to be discretionary, and relatively less likely to be formally or explicitly rewarded in the organization" (Podsakoff et al. 2000, p. 549).

[2] While the board literature (e.g., Yoshikawa et al., 2014; Zajac and Westphal, 1996) commonly uses the term 'outside directors', Higgs Review (2003, p. 6.19) notes that "'Outside director' is a term used in the US and elsewhere but it is not widely recognized in the UK". For the sake of convenience, this study considers outside directors to be both non-executive directors and independent non-executive directors because they are appointed to perform the same director duties.

Key Dimensions of OCB in the Boardroom

Although OCB is a multi-dimensional construct, there is a little consensus regarding the multiple dimensions of OCB. For instance, Organ (1988) initially identifies five key OCB dimensions (i.e., altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy), but Organ (1997) subsequently acknowledges that there is some confusion about certain dimensions, such as altruism and conscientiousness. Furthermore, a comprehensive review of OCB literature conducted by Podsakoff et al. (2000) reports that there are nearly 30 different dimensions identified, although some similarities and overlapping are found among some of these dimensions. Based on conceptual overlapping, the researchers have carefully consolidated these multiple dimensions into seven key dimensions that capture OCB: (1) helping behavior, (2) sportsmanship, (3) organizational loyalty, (4) organizational compliance, (5) individual initiative, (6) civic virtue, and (7) self-development. By showing the relevance of OCB in the board context, we adopt these relatively well-clarified seven dimensions and identify how these dimensions can apply to the boardroom.

Helping behavior typically includes voluntarily helping other members of an organization and preventing the development of problems for other members (Organ 1988, 1990). In the boardroom context, helping behavior can be seen as the individual director helping other members and/or the board by engaging in "other-serving" behavior. For example, a director can help a board environment to become more conducive to open discussion or help other board members to provide resources more effectively. Research by Preston and Brown (2004, p. 227) suggests that providing assistance where needed is a typical type of directors' OCB, which "may entail chairing a committee, mentoring a new board member, or volunteering to help address operational issues of the organization".

Sportsmanship includes a person's willingness to tolerate or accept inconveniences and to maintain a positive attitude even if their opinions or suggestions may not be accepted by others (Organ 1990). Although discretional, in the boardroom context, it is important for directors to demonstrate sportsmanship because this positive attitude help to promote a board environment that is constructive and not distracted by interpersonal conflict. Research has suggested that an effective board often maintains a positive decision-making culture supported by its members (Huse 2005), and outside directors should be 'challenging but supportive' and 'independent but involved' (Roberts et al. 2005, p. 6). Similarly, Finkelstein and Mooney (2003, p. 104) note that "Directors can have strong views, and when they are not balanced with a degree of tolerance and open-mindedness, they can disrupt how the board works together".

Organizational loyalty involves promoting an organization to external parties and remaining committed to the organization even under difficult conditions (Podsakoff et al. 2000). Although organizational loyalty is not expected from outside directors, it is not uncommon to find that some directors exhibit loyal behavior to the board and organization they serve. For example, Withers et al.'s (2012) study of firms facing organizational crisis reports that rather than resigning, some directors are willing to remain on the board and assist the organization through a crisis. This type of organizational loyalty behavior is also found in other studies of corporate boards (e.g., Lorsch and MacIver 1989).

Organizational compliance includes acceptance of an organization's rules and procedures by internalizing them (Borman and Motowidlo 1993). Compared with other dimensions of OCB, we argue that organizational compliance is the weakest indication of directors' OCB because organizational compliance is often regarded as an expected part of directors' duties. For example, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) advertised a position description for outside directors who need to "act in the best interests of IWDA as a whole, irrespective of personal, professional, commercial or other interests, loyalties or affiliations and in compliance with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) code of conduct. Also, appointed directors are expected to comply with their obligations under relevant laws and IWDA's policies" (IWDA 2015, p. 2). Although this dimension is more likely to be expected from directors, we argue that it is possible that the extent of compliance with (or deviation from) organizational rules and procedures may vary among directors. In other words, directors can demonstrate their discretion through the degree of such engagement (i.e., far beyond formal requirements).

Individual initiative involves performing one's task at a level that is far beyond formal requirements (Podsakoff et al. 2000). Directors' individual initiative usually involves voluntary behavior that can have a positive effect on the board environment and can thereby inspire other directors to improve their task performance. Finkelstein and Mooney (2003, p. 111) note that "If we really believe that boards are groups […] it starts with directors who encourage facilitation techniques that can promote greater director involvement and debate". In addition, these researchers suggest that asking CEOs probing and big-picture questions is an initiative that directors should consider to make good use of board meetings.

Civic virtue entails involvement in and commitment to the organization as a whole and involves such activities as participation in the organization's governance and ensuring vigilance to protect its interests (Organ 1988; Podsakoff et al. 2000). Civic virtue is highly relevant to the monitoring and resource provision roles of directors, whose active engagement in such behavior can help safeguard and maximize an organization's value. For instance, a position description for outside directors from InCommunities states that "it is looking for dynamic, committed and motivated people to join its board […] able to uphold the highest standards of accountability with integrity and good governance". Likewise, AICD (2011, p. 3) suggests that directors' personal competencies include "Integrity—fulfilling a director's duties and responsibilities, acting ethically, appropriate independence, putting the organisation's interests before personal interests; […] and an active contributor with genuine interest in the organization and its business". Although research on board governance has largely indicated the importance of directors' engagement in this dimension (Hillman and Dalziel 2003; Kroll et al. 2008), it is clear that the degree of such engagement may vary quite significantly among individual directors.

Finally, *self-development* includes such activities as voluntary actions to improve one's skills and abilities to perform tasks (George and Brief 1992). In the board context, self-development is not necessarily expected, but it is often viewed as a preferred behavior of directors to enable them to effectively perform their monitoring and resource provision roles. Further, organizations such as Coca-Cola actively promote directors' self-development behavior. Coca-Cola's (2013, p. 5) guidelines to the board of directors state that "Continuing director education […] each director is expected to take reasonable steps to remain current in his or her professional development, including attendance at periodic corporate governance seminars or meetings and review of pertinent governance publications, recognizing that the amount and form of professional development needs may vary depending on each director's circumstances". However, Coca-Cola (2013) also understands that the degree of such engagement may vary depending on individual directors.

In sum, directors' OCB is one scale construct that consists of seven dimensions in the board context. It is possible that some of these dimensions are more commonly practiced by some directors than by others. Furthermore, these dimensions of OCB are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can sometimes be reinforcing. That is, one OCB dimension is closely related to the other (e.g., helping behavior and organizational loyalty), and directors may exhibit multiple OCBs at the same time. Notably, these different dimensions help explain what OCB consists of in the board context, and the integration of these dimensions explains the degree of directors' engagement in OCB.

OCB Framework: Directors' Role Identity and Alignment

There are some unique characteristics of individual directors that differ from the characteristics of other professionals. The board as a group reflects this uniqueness. Many directors are outsiders of the organization who are affiliated with another organization, often on a full-time basis, and their board membership is a part-time position. Some directors also have multiple board positions as an outside director. Hence, directors often have another professional role outside of the boardroom. Although the board functions as a group, its members do not work together on a continual basis. Directors meet and interact with other directors when there are board meetings and committee meetings (if they also sit on the same board committees). This clearly differs from other types of work-related groups or teams because the frequency of directors' interaction is much more limited. Such characteristics of board members mean that our focus on directors' multiple role identities is closely related to their engagement in OCB.

Director's Role Identity

Role-identity theorists argue that with the multiple roles that people encounter, their behaviors are guided by the most salient role that provides greater meaning to help them define "who I am" (Thoits 1991, 1992). Likewise, Welbourne et al. (1998, p. 542) note that "the more meaning we derive from a role, the greater the behavioral guidance that ultimately leads to the enactment of behaviors associated with that role". In the boardroom context, many outside directors (hereafter, outsiders) often hold other professional roles. These outsiders are frequently selected precisely because they have expertise, experience, and knowledge in these other roles, which are often their primary occupations (e.g., as a CEO of another organization or as a banker, lawyer, or accountant). This characterization implies that the professional role identity of many directors is derived from their primary occupation and their *director role identity* (DRI) is based on their board position. This also suggests that their boardroom behavior may be guided by these multiple identities, especially the extent to which each director identifies him/herself as a director even when the board position is his or her part-time position. Comparing DRI and professional role identity, we argue that a director's DRI is one of the key motivators to engage in OCB because this identity influences the degree of commitment to the director role (Serpe 1987; Serpe and Stryker 1987). While the specific roles and responsibilities of directors may vary in accordance with their country of origin, a director's primary duty is generally to safeguard the interests of the firm and its shareholders. Furthermore, a director's fiduciary duties often involve strict obligations of "fidelity, loyalty, trust and confidence" (Cole 2012, p. 46).[3] Hillman et al. (2008) suggest that a director who strongly identifies with the director role is more likely to engage in his or her duties. That is, such a director will be more willing to commit his or her time and efforts to fulfill the monitoring and resource provision roles and will likely be motivated to maintain a reputation as a competent director. As engagement in OCB means going beyond one's in-role duties, we expect that a director's strong identification with his or her director role is an important antecedent of the director's OCB. Because OCB is a discretionary behavior that is not necessarily formally rewarded, one who engages in such behavior is usually strongly committed to the group to which s/he belongs. Hence, if a director's DRI is strong, s/he would be more inclined to learn and identify areas for improving the board's effectiveness, and consequently, the director would be more willing to engage in a great deal of OCB to enhance the overall performance of the board. In contrast, a director with weak identification as a director would likely be less interested in engaging in "other-serving" behaviors such as OCB. Such a director likely treats the director role as secondary to his or her primary professional role and is rather passive even in fulfilling his or her board duties (Hillman et al. 2008) and more passive in engaging in OCB. Therefore, we argue that a director's OCB engagement level is affected by the degree of DRI. In summary, we present the following proposition:

Proposition 1 *The degree of a director's engagement in OCB is affected by his or her DRI such that a director with stronger DRI will be more motivated to engage in OCB.*

Director's Role-Identity Alignment

The extent of alignment in directors' professional and director roles likely varies significantly among individuals. The alignment of multiple roles can occur as a result of the convergence of interests, values, goals, norms, and task content for those role identities (Ashforth et al. 2008), and similar behaviors or set of activities may be required to serve those interests and goals. In other words, overlaps in those dimensions likely facilitate the alignment of different

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[3] For instance, according to the UK's Corporate Governance Code (2014) and Companies Act (2006, Clauses 170–177), the general duties of a director include "to act within powers; to promote the success of the company; to exercise independent judgment; to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence; to avoid conflicts of interest; not to accept benefits from third parties; and to declare interest in proposed transaction or arrangement".

role identities. In such cases, role boundaries are expected to be more impermeable. When there is a conflict or misalignment between multiple role identities, a director's motivation to fulfill his or her board duties and further engage in OCB may be negatively affected. However, the presence of role identity conflict is a matter of extent rather than binary, and many individuals often face minor conflict in their multiple role identities (Ashforth et al. 2008). Nevertheless, identity conflict is likely to create a disincentive to perform one's role (Hillman et al. 2008), usually the secondary or less salient role.

Outside directors are appointed based on their expertise and knowledge in their other professional positions that are valuable to the firm (Hillman and Dalziel 2003). They are capable individuals who are expected to use their "external" knowledge and resources when they serve as director. However, the extent to which these directors can leverage their knowledge and experience from their other professional roles in their director role likely varies. Furthermore, norms, goals, values, and task content in their professional roles may be quite different from their director role. This implies that while outsiders' multiple roles are not clearly segmented (or impermeable), at least in some cases, some components of their roles are more clearly segmented than in other cases. For example, a director who is a corporate lawyer as a full-time profession may find his or her director role aligned because the director is expected to use his or her legal knowledge in both the director and professional roles to serve corporate interests. In contrast, an outsider who is a scientist is usually interested in knowledge creation and innovation. This professional role may not align with his or her director role, which emphasizes shareholder value maximization that may occur at the expense of innovation. Therefore, the alignment between the scientist's director and professional roles is likely weak as a result of differing goals.

When role-identity alignment occurs, the permeability of the overlapped roles increases, which promotes the importance of both roles to an individual (Lynch 2007). Simply put, the alignment of a director's professional and director role identities will likely increase the director's effectiveness (Hillman et al. 2008) because s/he has a stronger commitment and motivation to serve the board. Therefore, we propose that the role-identity alignment between the professional and director roles enhances a director's engagement in OCB.

Proposition 2 *The degree of a director's engagement in OCB is affected by the alignment of the professional role identity and DRI such that a director with greater role-identity alignment will be more motivated to engage in OCB.*

Board-Level Dimensions as Moderators

While individuals' role-identity salience and overlapping are important drivers of their OCB, directors are also members of the board and function as a group, and the characteristics of the board may have a profound effect on individual directors' behavior. This effect occurs because when nested in a group (the board), directors' OCB may depend on the particular board on which they sit. This interactive nature between directors and the board is well acknowledged in the board governance literature (see Boyd et al. 2011; Dalton and Dalton 2011). Supporting this view, recent research has called for exploration of the potential interaction between board structure and the director identity-behavior link (Withers et al. 2012). In practice, it is not uncommon to find the same director behaving differently on different boards or even behaving differently on the same board when the board structure changes (Finkelstein and Mooney 2003).

The OCB logic suggests that a director's OCB is presented, when a director performs duties beyond the expected level on the basis of a set level of formal reward. However, researchers have shown that in the boardroom context, the expectations of directors in relation to performing their duties vary across different boards (Cole 2012; Forbes and Milliken 1999; Minichilli et al. 2012). In other words, while a director's OCB is intrinsically motivated, the degree of his or her OCB engagement may be altered by the perceived "expectation" of the director from a particular board. Subsequently, considering the structural aspect and focusing on the level of expected effort at the board level, we identify two key dimensions-board capital and informal board hierarchy order-to explain the possible variation in directors' OCB in different organizations.

Board Capital

Board capital refers to "the sum of individual director's human and social capital, which represents the ability of a board to provide resources to the firm" (Haynes and Hillman 2010, p. 1146; see also Hillman and Dalziel 2003). Board capital enables the board to effectively address a variety of managerial and strategic issues, which usually entail multiple dimensions such as strategic, financial, legal, and marketing dimensions. Hence, the level of board capital that a board possesses becomes important in determining the degree of effort the board expects from its individual members.

According to Hillman and Dalziel (2003), board capital is the major prerequisite of a board's resource provision to an organization. While board members with external ties are able to access valuable resources for the focal organization from external sources from a resource dependence perspective (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), the extent of their commitment to do so may vary depending on the level of board capital. When a board has a great deal of human and social capital provided by its members, the board can gather critical resources from its current pool of members and can become more capable of handling various board issues. Hence, in boards with rich capital, the level of expectation from individual board members can be relatively low, and directors' OCB may not be in great demand. In contrast, when a board has a relatively low level of board capital, it may not have sufficient capacity to make important decisions. In that situation, the board may have a greater expectation that its members will access their external networks to obtain necessary resources or help coordinate board tasks with limited resources to handle each decision. In such boards, directors' motivation to engage in OCB might be enhanced because they foresee that more assistance and effort are expected from them and are therefore more willing to perform helpful behaviors for other members and the board.

Thus, we argue that board capital can affect directors' OCB engagement because directors perceive a board that is low on capital and relies on them for resources, advice, and support, thereby strengthening their motivation to engage in OCB. Consequently, we propose that board capital is an important contingency factor for directors' OCB and that directors' DRI and OCB relationship is adversely affected by board capital.

A similar argument is expected for the moderating effect of board capital on the relationship between directors' role alignment and their engagement in OCB. We suggested earlier that the alignment of directors' multiple identities, including their professional and director identities, would likely enhance their commitment to their board role and thereby increase their motivation to engage in OCB. However, the level of expectation for directors to make extra efforts beyond their formal board duties will likely decline when a board has rich capital in terms of professional expertise, knowledge, experience, and social ties. Hence, the positive impact of identity alignment will be mitigated by rich board capital. We therefore present the following propositions.

Proposition 3a *The positive relationship between a director's DRI and the degree of OCB engagement is weakened as board capital increases.*

Proposition 3b *The positive relationship between the alignment of a director's professional role identity and DRI and the degree of OCB engagement is weakened as board capital increases.*

Informal Board Hierarchy Order

An informal hierarchy denotes an implicit board structure that can influence the effectiveness of interactions among board members. According to He and Huang (2011, p. 1121), an informal board hierarchy is developed based on "differentiation in the deference that directors give and receive". Board informal hierarchy functions as a "coordinating mechanism" in which board members have a clear understanding of one another's standing within the board and provide input accordingly (He and Huang 2011; Magee and Galinsky 2008; Tam and Hu 2006).

The identification of one's seniority on a board can be quite straightforward (Finkelstein and Mooney 2003). The seniority of a board member can usually be signaled by factors such as being viewed as having a wider scope of knowledge, experience, and networks external to the organization or being well respected within the industry, perhaps including sitting on multiple boards, especially the boards of large, reputable organizations (Johnson et al. 2013). Forbes and Milliken (1999, p. 495) note that the effective use of knowledge and skills on a board is a "heedful interrelating" and "collective learning" process among board members. To facilitate this process, the informal hierarchy of a board becomes central. That is, in understanding the order of seniority on the board, directors can be more aware of the expectations for their service in relation to others and can discern when their service contribution to the board is needed.

Consequently, we argue that the order of a board's informal hierarchy can have a positive effect on directors' perception of the level of OCB effort that is expected from them. For example, when a director is relatively senior within the informal hierarchy of the board and is aware of areas to which s/he can contribute, the higher level of expected effort to assist others will positively boost their voluntary engagement in OCB. In contrast, a director who is relatively junior on the board may find that OCB activity is less expected from them because there are more senior directors on the board. As such, OCB assistance from junior members may not be perceived as greatly necessary, and the level of expected effort from them may be low. To address this gap between the director's role-identity motivation in OCB engagement and self-perceived low expectations, the director may be less motivated to engage in OCB. Therefore, we argue that while a director's role-identity salience affects his or her motivation to engage in OCB, the seniority order within the informal board hierarchy affects this relationship.

The positive motivational effect of the alignment of a director's professional role identity and his or her DRI is likely to be affected by informal board hierarchy order in a similar way. A director's motivation to engage in OCB as a result of the alignment of a director's professional role identity and his or her DRI will likely be intensified, when the director is positioned at a higher level in the board informal hierarchical order because of the identity alignment and the higher level position. In other words, a positive effect of role identity alignment is further enhanced by a positive effect of the director's self-perceived high expectation to serve the board more through OCB. Hence, we present the following propositions.

Proposition 4a *The positive relationship between a director's DRI and the degree of OCB engagement is strengthened as his or her position in the informal board hierarchy increases.*

Proposition 4b *The positive relationship between the alignment of a director's professional role identity and DRI and the degree of OCB engagement is strengthened as his or her position in the informal board hierarchy increases.*

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework discussed in the propositions above.

Discussion and Conclusions

A director's task boundaries are usually ambiguous, especially compared with other professions. However, even for directors on a board, some activities or behaviors clearly constitute their formal duties, while others are usually perceived as OCB because directors will not be rewarded for engaging in such activities. Similarly, even for their formal board duties and activities, such as attending board meetings and participating in discussions, some directors may perform far beyond the expected level. Our theoretical model focuses on role identity in an attempt to demonstrate one of the key drivers for directors to engage in OCB. Specifically, we focus on an individual director's role identity (DRI) to advance our understanding of directors' OCB.

We argue that DRI is one of the key factors that motivate directors to engage in OCB. We theorize that a high level of DRI motivates directors not only to fulfill their board duties but also to engage voluntarily in "other-serving" behaviors. We further propose that a director's role identities as a director and as a professional in another position are sometimes aligned because these roles share common values, norms, task content, and goals, and hence are not always clearly segmented. We contend that such aligned role identities can motivate directors to engage in OCB. By linking directors' role identity to OCB, we extend the prior research on directors' role identity (e.g., Golden-Biddle and Rao 1997; Hillman et al. 2008; Withers et al. 2012) and attempt to make a contribution to the literature.

In addition, we have discussed two board-level contingencies, board capital, and informal board hierarchy order, which may moderate the effect of directors' role identity on their OCB. We argue that low levels of board capital enhance directors' motivation to engage in OCB because directors sense that a board with limited capital is likely to rely on them for greater support. We also theorize that directors in higher positions in a board's informal hierarchy are likely to engage in OCB because of the expectation that such individuals should exert greater effort. In sum, some board-level factors can influence the effect of directors' role identities on their OCB.

Theoretical Contributions

Our theoretical model advances the corporate governance and board research in several ways. First, this study contributes to the board literature by extending the research on director identity (Hillman et al. 2008; Withers et al. 2012). Specifically, this paper explores a new behavioral

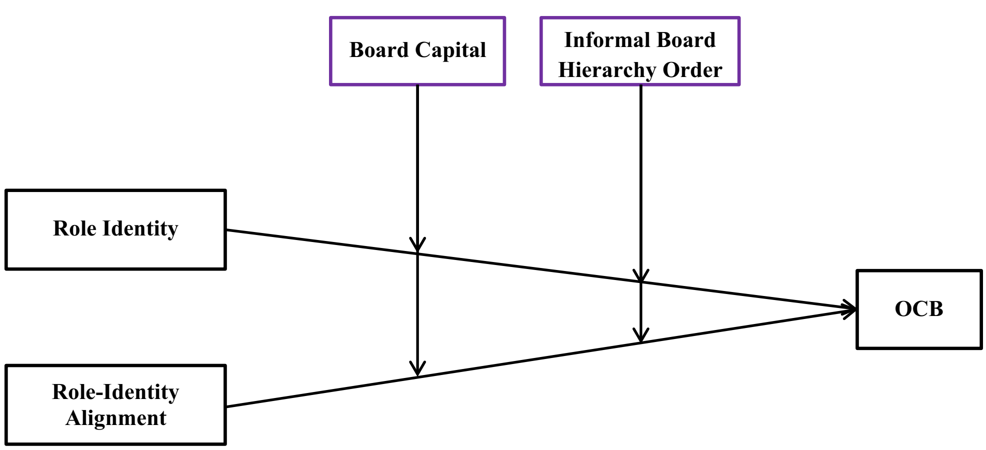

Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of directors' OCB in the boardroom

dimension of directors (i.e., OCB). Although Withers et al. (2012) explore directors' helping behavior during an organizational crisis, prior research does not specifically focus on directors' OCB or discretionary behaviors, although such behavior likely help to improve board effectiveness. Given the ambiguity of directors' task boundaries and the self-motivated nature of OCB engagement, we believe that a theoretical model that systematically discusses the effects of directors' role identities on their OCB has important implications for board effectiveness.

Second, we advance the understanding of directors' motivations to contribute to the board by engaging in OCB. Prior research usually uses proxy variables such as directors' tenure, experience, and financial compensation to explore effects on board effectiveness or organizational performance. However, directors' motivations have not been specifically examined. While directors are likely to have a wide range of reasons to assume corporate directorships (Hambrick et al. 2008), there remains a lack of clear understanding of their motivation to exert extra effort to perform their board role. Our theoretical model presents a mechanism that leads directors to engage in OCB, a form of engagement that involves intrinsically motivated actions.

Third, our theoretical model incorporates the multilevel factors that can affect directors' motivations not only to fulfill their board duties but also to engage in OCB. While each director has his or her own individual source of motivation, the director is also embedded in the boardroom environment, which inevitably affects his or her behavior. By identifying the board-level factors that may influence a director's motivations to engage in OCB through role identities, we attempt to explain why the director is more likely to engage in OCB under certain board conditions.

Practical Implications

Our research has two important practical implications for boards. First, our theoretical framework demonstrates that some directors are more motivated to contribute to the board by going beyond their formal duties because of their strong role identity as a director. This finding suggests that it is not always sufficient to examine the professional backgrounds of director candidates. As research has shown that there are strong links between directors' role identification and their governance roles (Capezio et al. 2014; Zhu and Yoshikawa 2015), it is important for boards to use survey or other mechanisms to identify highly motivated directors who can enhance the effective functioning of the board.

Another implication is that boards can build a culture that values and supports OCB engagement among their members. For example, boards in family-controlled organizations may have a more relational culture in which board members tend to be recruited based on social ties with family owners. In such a board culture, directors may be more inclined to help one another. Additionally, if a board has established a positive culture that values members' OCB, it is more likely to motivate other members, especially newly appointed directors, to engage in similar behaviors. Therefore, a supportive board culture that appreciates the "other-serving" behavior of its members can help to raise the level of OCB engagement by its members.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several avenues for future research to extend our theoretical model. First, this study presents a parsimonious model by identifying directors' role identity and role-identity alignment as the key antecedents of OCB engagement. While our study builds on the board literature that highlights the interrelationship between directors' role identity and behavior, we have not included other antecedents, such as directors' personality traits and other individual attributes that may influence directors' OCB. Future research can include other antecedents that may affect the degree of a director's engagement in OCB.

Another limitation of the study is that our model does not take the CEO-board relationship into consideration. It is reasonable to believe that a CEO's personal character affects how board members engage in their board tasks, including OCB. The level of (over)confidence, hubris, or the narcissistic tendency of a CEO (Chatterjee and Hambrick 2011; Tang et al. 2015; Zhu and Chen 2014) may also influence the degree of the directors' engagement in OCB through their interaction with the CEO. Focusing on the CEO-director relationship, Del Brio et al. (2013) examine how directors' perceptions of CEOs' trustworthiness affect their governance behavior. Because this important factor will likely impact how directors behave in the boardroom, future research may consider this relationship in the research model.

Third, researchers can explore the boundaries of OCB by examining the types of activities that are usually perceived as OCB in the boardroom. OCB is discretionary behavior that is not formally rewarded. However, the formal task boundaries of board members are not always clear cut. Therefore, it would be helpful to advance our understanding of what constitutes such discretionary behaviors and the extent to which board members typically engage in such behaviors. Because archival data are limited in the exploration of directors' behavioral motivation, we believe that more qualitative work or survey-oriented research should be undertaken.

Finally, future studies can explore possible outcomes of directors' OCB engagement. For instance, there is a stream of research that examines the relationships between boardroom characteristics and firms' corporate philanthropy strategy (Brown et al. 2006; Coffey and Wang 1998; Wang and Coffey 1992). Some studies report that a firm is more likely to make corporate donations when its board has more female directors (Wang and Coffey 1992; Williams 2003). Given that OCB focuses on "other-serving" behavior, will a board with a higher level of OCB engagement by its members pay greater attention to stakeholders, such as committing to corporate social responsibility and/or philanthropic activities? It would be of interest to explore the types of corporate strategies and outcomes that OCB can produce for a firm.

Conclusion

The role of the board is becoming increasingly important to organizations. Prior research has generally focused on directors' formal duties, including managerial monitoring and resource provision. However, some board members, especially those who have a DRI, are likely to exert greater efforts in their board role and may even perform beyond their formal duties by engaging in OCB. As Hambrick et al. (2008) note, directors' motivations to serve on the board are quite interesting because of the rising risk of lawsuits, increasing responsibilities, and less attractive pay for highly talented individuals. We have focused on directors' role identities and the manner in which these affect directors' motivation to engage in OCB. There are other important factors that may motivate directors not only to fulfill their board duties but also to engage in OCB, and we hope that our paper will stimulate research on this important topic.

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